Lane sues in People's Temple matter

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Lawyer Mark Lane has filed a $12 million libel suit against The New York Times, claiming his professional reputation was damaged by the newspaper's stories about the 1978 People's Temple suicides.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Teresa Buford, a former administrator of the People's Temple in Guyana, and Lane, who represented the Rev. Jim Jones, leader of the religious cult.

More than 900 followers of Jones committed suicide or were slain in November 1978 near Jonestown, Guyana.

The suit, filed Friday, names as defendants the Times; its board chairman, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger; and reporters David Binder and John M. Crewdson.

A Times spokesman who asked not to be named said The Times would not comment on the suit pending receipt and review of the court papers.

U.S. District Judge Harry Wellford, assigned to hear the case, has not yet scheduled a hearing.